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Click It or Ticket is saving lives

Enforcement blitz buckling down on those not buckled up

By U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center

Nearly one in five Americans, approximately 17 percent nationally, still fail to regularly wear their seat belts when driving or riding in motor vehicles, according to a recent National Highway Traffic Safety Administration seat belt study. The number of back seat passengers who fail to buck up is higher still, at more than 25 percent. This research also shows there is a problem with drivers and passengers not buckling up at night, when the risk of a fatal crash is even greater.

The Army lost 75 Soldiers in fiscal 2009 to both day and night POV accidents. Of those drivers and passengers, about 33 percent were reported as not wearing their seat belts.

Regular seat belt use is the single most effective way to protect people and reduce fatalities in motor vehicle crashes. NHSTA statistics show that in 2007, more than 15,000 lives were saved by seat belts in potentially fatal crashes. When worn correctly, seat belts have proven to reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passengers by 45 percent in cars and 60 percent in pickup trucks, SUVs and minivans.

"Too many Soldiers take the attitude that a serious POV accident will never happen to them. Fatal POV crashes can and do happen every day—no one is immune or invincible," said Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Eyer, command sergeant major for the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center. "This is why the Army is joining with state and local law enforcement agencies and highway safety officials from May 24 to June 6, 2010, to participate in the aggressive national 'Click It or Ticket' seat belt enforcement mobilization."

On and off the installation, law enforcement officers will be out enforcing seat belt laws by conducting seat belt checkpoints and zero tolerance seat belt enforcement. Military police and other law enforcement organizations are not out there to just write tickets, but to save lives and get everyone to buckle up both during the day and at night. The bottom line is failure to wear a seat belt can be deadly.

For more information on the national "Click It or Ticket" mobilization, please visit www.nhtsa.gov.

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